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in Jonson it acquired by the way a variety of meanings, including disposition or characteristic inclination, vice, folly or affectation. Since Jonson used the term in all of these ways, it is evident that no definite meaning can be attached to the word in his work. The elder Knowell and Justice Clement in *Every Man in* are, for example, humor characters in a very different sense from Philautia or Moria in *Cynthia's Revels*.

For a complete study of humor comedy the investigation should be carried forward from Jonson's time as well as backward. What relation to humor comedy have such characters as Mrs. Malaprop, Croaker, Micawber, or Sir Willoughby Patern? How far is the comedy of Molière humor comedy? Is there, as a matter of fact, any absolutely fundamental idea attaching to the conception of humor beyond that of abnormality, departure from the ideal type as recognized by the best judgment of the civilized society of the time? If this is so, how far can humor comedy be philosophically distinguished from any other branch of the comedy of manners? It seems to me that Jonson's confident use of the term has led to the belief that the use of humors in comedy is a more distinct and novel method than the facts actually justify us in assuming. Jonsonian comedy is of course a different thing from Shakespearian, Fletcherian or Middletonian. It is strictly intellectual, it is didactic, earnest and satirical, it is lacking in charm and grace, it is supremely interested in character, which is sometimes distorted into caricature and stressed at the expense of plot. It is this combination of features that gives distinct character to Jonsonian comedy and not merely the use of humors, which has, I believe, been given a somewhat factitious importance in criticism.

In conclusion, it should be said that Professor Baskervill's main contention has been abundantly established, that the undertaking has been pursued with scholarly care and diligence, and that the book adds materially to our knowledge of Jonson's literary methods and affiliations.

*University of Kansas.*

W. S. JOHNSON.

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Mediaeval Story and the Beginnings of the Social Ideals of English-Speaking People by William Witherle Lawrence, Ph. D., Associate Professor of English in Columbia University. Lemeke and Buechner. New York. 1911. \$1.50 net.

We have here a series of eight lectures delivered by Professor Lawrence at Cooper Union during February and March, 1911. In the first of the series, Professor Lawrence clearly

sketches the ground-work of ideas upon which the subsequent lectures are elaborated. His main point is that we may profitably study early racial or national contributions to our present-day civilization in such socially significant pieces of literature as the *Beowulf*, the *Chanson de Roland*, and the *Arthurian Romances*. In voicing the mind of a people rather than that of an individual such work has a cultural meaning broader but more readily appraised than the literature of more modern times. *Beowulf*, for instance, though in no sense a patriotic poem, "represents the foundations of the modern Anglo-Saxon character in its lofty spirit, its vigor, and its sincerity"; and the Roland reveals that "consecration to a higher ideal of Church and State which was not the least of those elements in the French character which, in spite of much that was selfish and sordid, quickened the life of the English into new vigor after the Conquest, and made possible their later achievements in the years to come."

The lectures are, of course, conditioned in style and point of view by the circumstances under which they were given. Quite properly avoiding debate and omitting the apparatus of scholarship, they do not challenge the critic to a discussion of disputed points. Certainly Professor Lawrence's cautious scholarship more than entitles him to waive such discussions in a volume like this. Any omissions of the kind are amply atoned for by a broad and stimulating treatment of epic, romantic, and popular matter. The book is sure to reach a larger audience than that for which it was originally designed. We are inclined to associate it with Professor Ker's studies and sundry luminous essays of Gaston Paris, although the latter often make their appeal to minds of not a little preparedness in scholarship. We see no reason why the volume should not find a place in college classes; we commend it to those afflicted with scholarly myopia; and we can testify that to at least one instructor it has brought refreshment and much interesting speculation about the larger meanings of mediaeval literature.

H. S. V. JONES.

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Materials for a Study of Spenser's Theory of Fine Art. Ida Langdon, M.A. Ithaca, N. Y. 1911.

This thesis falls into two parts: a collection of Illustrative Passages, which are the 'materials' mentioned in the title, and an Introduction, which outlines the more important inferences to be drawn from them. The term 'fine art' is used in its widest possible extent, to cover not merely architecture, painting, music, etc., but poetry, needle-work, and landscape gar-